

# MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

Vol. XXII

JULY, 1961

No. 3



Young Mennonites At Elkhart, Indiana, Around 1890

Upper row, left to right: De Witt Good, John Byers, S. F. Coffman, Aaron C. Kolb, William Coffman, Andrew Mumaw.  
Lower row, left to right: John Horsch, A. B. Kolb, George L. Bender, Ansel Coffman, ——— Ebersole, Menno S. Steiner  
(As identified by Phoebe Mumaw Kolb.)

## Elkhart Young Men Became Church Leaders

MELVIN GINGERICH

The exact date of the above picture is not known, but it must have been taken between 1889 and 1893, for those were the years when M. S. Steiner lived in Elkhart, Indiana, where the picture was taken. John Horsch was in Elkhart from 1887 to 1895 while G. L. Bender came to Elkhart in 1887. S. F. Coffman left Elkhart in 1894, which again confirms an early date for the picture, around 1890.

S. F. Coffman (1872-1954) after graduating from Elkhart High School in 1890, worked for the Mennonite Publishing Company in Elkhart until 1894, when he went to Chicago to work in the Mennonite mission. In 1903 he was ordained bishop at Vineland, Ontario, where

he served the Mennonite Church the rest of his life. He was active in many areas of church work, serving on church wide committees, particularly in music, history, peace, Sunday school, colonization, education, publishing, and missions. He was the son of the pioneer evangelist J. S. Coffman, who had been brought to Elkhart by the pioneer Mennonite publisher John F. Funk.

John Horsch (1867-1941) came to Elkhart in 1887 to work for John F. Funk in the Mennonite Publishing Company, where he did editorial work on the *Herold Der Wahrheit* until 1895. In 1908 he moved to Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, where he spent the rest of his life in editorial work, historical research and in

writing books and articles. He became an authority in the field of Anabaptist history, widely known for his historical writings. He served the Mennonite Church with devotion for many years.

George L. Bender (1867-1921) came to Elkhart in 1887, where he served as a traveling representative of the Mennonite Publishing Company. From 1892 on to the end of his life, he devoted his time to the financial interests of the Mennonite missionary program, as treasurer and financial agent of the mission board in Elkhart. He was also active in relief work and in the local Prairie Street congregation, where he served as deacon.

Menno Simon Steiner (1886-1911) was teaching school when in 1889 John F. Funk persuaded him to work for the Mennonite Publishing House in Elkhart. He traveled

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## History of the Christopel Mennonite Church

MARY LOIS WENGER

The Christopel Mennonite Church was named after Preacher Jacob Christopel who was born on December 31, 1782, at Rothenbach in the Palatinate. Jacob came to America in the summer of 1818. The passport which he used is now kept by his grandson, Wesley W. Christopel of Elkhart, Indiana, who is still living. This passport describes Jacob as a man 36 years of age, about five feet three inches tall, with blond hair and beard, light gray eyes, and a face which was marked with smallpox pits.

Jacob first settled in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania (1818), and in 1824 moved to Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. He was ordained preacher in 1827 by Bishop David Funk (1765-1833). Jacob became a United States citizen in 1831 at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1835 he moved to Columbiana County, Ohio, and to Elkhart County, Indiana, in 1848. He lived in Indiana until his death on December 3, 1868, at the age of 85 years, 11 months, and 3 days.

Besides being a preacher, Jacob was a linen weaver and farmer. His farm was located in Section 6 of Jackson Township, Elkhart County, a little over two miles east of Foraker, Indiana. The Jacob Christopel farm is now occupied by Eugene Martin, a Wisler Mennonite.

Jacob Christopel was married three times. On May 2, 1813, he married Gertrude Berg, who died on December 22, 1816. One daughter was born to this marriage. His second wife was Susan Neff. They were married on July 29, 1817, and had six children. She died on July 18, 1830. Barbara Bare of Virginia was his third wife. Seven children were born to this marriage. Barbara died on November 10, 1874, one month less than six years after his death. Jacob Christopel had a total of fourteen children.

Around 1850 the Mennonites of the Jackson and Union Townships built a log church building located on County Road 142 and on Section 6 of Jackson Township, Elkhart County, Indiana. The 1874 *Historical Atlas of Elkhart Co.* shows the Christopel Church about one-eighth of a mile from the Union Township Line, with the label, M. Ch. Wesley W. Christopel, Jacob

Christopel's grandson, says that the building stood along the south side of County Road 142, parallel with the road. He says he worshipped at this church as a child. The door of the church was at the east end of the building. The porch, located on the east end also, had no roof over it. There were about three windows on both the north and south sides and two windows on the west end. Wesley W. Christopel was told that the first window-panes were oiled paper. The pulpit was at the west end, although it was not actually a pulpit—just a table.

After the church was built, Jacob Christopel gave a deed for the one-half acre of land on which the big church stood, for a public burying ground. He said that "the Meeting House [was] to be for the use of the Menonite [sic] Church forever." (Elkhart County Deed Book 18, page 135). The deed specifies that he was paid \$5 for the one-half acre. Jacob and Barbara Christopel signed the deed in German script on April 22, 1854.

Record was kept in different sources of well-known preachers who preached at this church occasionally. The 1864 *Herald of Truth*, page 49, reports that Preacher David Sherk of Ontario preached there on Monday, July 18, 1864. John M. Brenneman of Ohio preached there October 10, 1865. On January 19, 1868, John F. Funk preached. The pulpit was regularly supplied by such ministers as Bishop Jacob Wisler (1808-1839), Bishop R. J. Smid (1813-1893), Preacher Jacob Freed (1796-1833), Preacher Christian Bare (1816-1904), Preacher John Weaver (1821-1907), and Bishop John M. Christopel (1819-1836). The 1871 *Herald of Truth*, page 194, reports that services were held every four weeks at the Christopel Church on the same Sunday as Elkhart and Shaum (Olive), but not the same Sunday as Yellow Creek and Holde-men. Only in the summertime were the services held at Christopel Church. The Mennonites of the area worshipped in a school house in the winter which was located one mile west and one-half mile south of the Christopel Church. One minister is known to have been ordained in the "Christopel District", evidently at the

Blosser Church. Martin Kreider (1838-1877) was ordained on June 22, 1873.

After the Frisian Mennonites from Balk, Holland, came to Elkhart County in 1853, they held some of their services in the Christopel log church. Wesley W. Christopel says, "Most of the members were Holland" [Mennonites].

By the late 1880's the Christopel log church was in poor condition and in 1889 the Mennonites who worshipped in the Christopel and Blosser Churches jointly built a new house of worship called Salem, located on Section 14 of Union Township. The Salem Church is two and one-eighth miles west and one and one-half miles south of the Christopel Church.

No congregational records were kept at all which would give us membership names. However the 1874 *Historical Atlas* gives us the names of citizens according to townships. Thus we can pick out Mennonite names and these people likely attended the services held in the Christopel Church. The information below lists the names, occupations, and places of birth of people taken from the atlas.

1. J. C. Burkholder—farmer born in Ontario.
2. Jacob Brown, Senior—farmer born in Ohio.
3. Amos P. Blosser—farmer born in Indiana.
4. John Culp, Jr.—farmer born in Ohio.
5. Henry Culp, Jr.—farmer and teacher born in Ohio.
6. David Conrad—farmer born in Indiana.
7. Jonas B. Coffman—farmer and carpenter born in Pennsylvania.
8. John Conrad—farmer born in Indiana.
9. Isaiah Christopel—farmer born in Indiana.
10. John Christopel—farmer born in Germany.
11. Samuel Hoover—farmer born in Pennsylvania.
12. Jonathan E. Herr—farmer and stock dealer born in Pennsylvania.
13. Daniel Landes—farmer born in Pennsylvania.
14. Jonas A. Martin—farmer born in Pennsylvania.

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## A Pioneer Venture in Journalism

EDWIN L. WEAVER

The beginning of the arrival of Mennonites in Elkhart County, Indiana, in 1845 places them among the pioneers. Promptly they established homes and churches, attended schools, and a little later found their activities reflected in newspapers. The *Wakarusa Sun*, a pioneer journalistic venture combining features of a literary journal and a newspaper, was preceded by newspapers in Goshen and Elkhart but came closest to the Mennonites in locality. It was issued regularly each week from June 18, 1874, to March 6, 1879. Its two major editors were Owen St. Clair, M.D., and John H. Brubaker, the latter serving as editor and proprietor through most of the last three years. John H. Brubaker was a product of the Wakarusa community and was a son of the Mennonite family of Joseph and Elizabeth (Nusbaum) Brubaker.

The purpose of The *Wakarusa Sun* was of course not primarily religious. The first editor strove for independence in politics and religion and for the amusement and instruction of his readers; the second editor meant to publish a Republican paper and made his definite political interests evident. Usually one page of each issue contains news of local interest and especially this page often has references to activities of the Mennonite people in the surrounding areas. There is really a paucity of such references, and yet in this local newspaper there are items sufficiently significant to possess historical value. It has been our intention to find these items and examine the information they record.

During the 1870's when Wakarusa had a population of 500 and Elkhart 7,000 the pioneer period was not yet past. Among Mennonites as well as among the people in general things were still in the beginning stage, but growth was everywhere in evidence. What references do we find to the several Mennonite churches that had been established in the communities surrounding Wakarusa? Enough to know that they existed!

The May 13, 1875, issue comments that the Mennonites are building a new meeting house one mile west of town and that the oldest inhabitant can not remember the circumstances of the building of the old one. (This is an exaggeration; the first one was built in 1851.) "The old one has become bedimmed with age and the brethren have

goodly fears that it may fall down some day upon their devoted heads." The *Sun* does not refer to this church as the Holdeman congregation, the name by which it has long since been known. In several later issues are announcements of religious services to be held at the Mennonite church one mile west of Wakarusa on Sunday at 10 a. m. In the October 4, 1877, issue is an announcement of the annual conference for the state of Indiana which will be held in the Yellow Creek meeting house at the usual time in the second week in October and all are invited to attend. This is true to fact; the Mennonite conference for Indiana was held annually the second Friday in October. There are references to funerals held at the Schaum Church (now the Olive Church) and at the Yellow Creek Church. Thus there are references to the three Mennonite churches of the time in the vicinity of Wakarusa.

Names of Elkhart County Mennonite leaders, particularly ordained ministers, appear, but in scant measure. Jacob A. Beutler is mentioned as doing the preaching in the services announced for the Mennonite church a mile west of Wakarusa, and he, designated at times as elder, is also named as officiating at marriages and funerals. Other ministers who officiated at either or both marriage and funeral services are J. M. Culbertson, John Christophel, John F. Funk, Christian Baer, Peter Lehman, Jacob Wisler, and Daniel Brenneman. There is an obituary of Preacher Martin E. Kreider. The names of preachers who lived closest to Wakarusa appear most often. This applies particularly to Jacob A. Beutler and J. M. Culbertson.

Surprisingly Preacher John Weaver, who had come to Elkhart County, Indiana, from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1868 and lived one and one-half miles east and one-half mile north of Wakarusa, is mentioned at least three times. A fire in the barn of John Weaver is commented on in the December 28, 1876, issue; while threshing with a steam engine and threshing machine a spark found its way into the hay mow; every man present went to work with a will and succeeded in subduing the flames before much damage was done. The July 25, 1878, issue tells of thirty-five stalks of wheat with an average of fifty large, plump kernels grown from a single kernel brought to the editor. It grew on the Weaver farm and the editor comments that it is the best specimen he has seen. Then an obituary of Mary, wife of John Weaver, was published January 23, 1879.

Generally references to Mennonites pertain to such vital events as births, marriages, and deaths, or to everyday affairs of a so-called secular nature. Frequently they indicate prosperity in farming and related activities. We read of Peter Y. Lehman returning from a four-weeks trip to Pennsylvania or on a certain occasion dislocating his finger; Joseph Holdeman driving fat hogs through town for the Chicago market and purchasing the Salathee farm two and one-half miles west of Wakarusa; Abraham Weldy (written Abram in the *Sun*), "one of our ablest farmers," growing apples, fattening steers, or being kicked by a horse; Daniel Freed and John Davidhizar building new houses west of town; Josiah Culp raising his bank barn; Henry Smeltzer a mile north of Wakarusa making a new barn out of an old one and later getting a new wind pump; Isaac Letherman having his buggy upset when his horses became frightened at the cemetery south of town; George Holdeman's illness and death of cancer; Jacob Loucks' little girl breaking her arm while playing in the barn and his later renting his farm to his son Henry; a public sale at the residence of Peter Loucks in Harrison Township; Christian N. Holdeman having a sick horse; the birth of a daughter of Joseph Landis in Locke Township on January 8, 1876 (this daughter was the mother of music teacher Dwight Weldy); Christian Witmer dying at the residence of Michael Witmer two miles north of Wakarusa. There are remarks that Henry Culp was one of the first settlers of Union Township and that his two brothers George Culp and Anthony Culp, old settlers from Ohio, came here when the country was a wilderness; also that John Wisler, who traveled about the country buying stock, was one of the first settlers in the vicinity of Locke.

The editor refers to calls to his office of Christian Nusbaum of Harrison Township, a pioneer Mennonite settler who emigrated to America from Switzerland. He is mentioned as "the daddy of all our Nusbaums here" and as one who "said cheering words for the newspaper enterprise." He was the grandfather of John H. Brubaker. Remarks occur often about Samuel Holdeman, who in earlier years was a member of the Mennonite Church a mile west of Wakarusa but after becoming engaged in business affairs and law practice joined a Wakarusa church.

There are other references to Mennonites. Editor St. Clair reports March 18, 1875, that Henry



Mumaw, editor of *Evening at Home*, Orrville, Ohio, called at the office. He remarks that Mr. Mumaw is a young man of much promise and considerable talent, and that he publishes a journal devoted to the interests of the family circle. In the June 10, 1875, issue is a letter from Amos Stealy, Peabody, Kansas, giving historically valuable information about the Mennonite settlement near there, a number of the settlers being from Elkhart County. The August 26, 1875, issue reports a grove meeting held by Mennonites about a mile and one-half east of Wakarusa on Saturday and Sunday with a large attendance on Sunday. One news item speaks of descendants of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in Indiana, and undoubtedly this includes or perhaps refers mainly to Mennonites.

Published appeals by Mennonites for temperance have been rather rare. A letter dated February 11, 1879, and addressed to the editor tells of a man one mile east of Wakarusa who was lying in the mud beside the road while his team was standing in the middle of the road. J. Weaver, writer of the letter, and Anthony Culp assisted the almost helpless man into his buggy. The writer, explaining that the man had just come from the saloon, placed blame on the man and on the saloon keeper and expressed opposition to the saloon, liquor, and drunkenness. It is probable that J. Weaver was a Mennonite as was his companion Anthony Culp, and he may have been Preacher John Weaver near whose farm the event occurred.

One can find information also about groups that were severed from the Mennonite Church. An item appears that the River Brethren (Brethren in Christ) will hold their regular meeting at Daniel Stump's on February 9 and 10, 1878. The present writer found only one reference to the group associated with Jacob Wisler (apart from references to individual members). A certain Moses Weaver west of Wakarusa had to spend some time in a mental institution. While he was away the neighbors met one Saturday to supply the wife with wood and only one of the members of the Wisler group came to help. The writer of the news item, published November 30, 1876, asks why it is that members of Wisler's church do not look after those who must have help.

The frequent notices concerning Daniel Brenneman indicate his considerable activity in the vicinity of Wakarusa. On a Sunday in July, 1875, he occupied the pulpit at the United Brethren Church in the village of Locke (south of Wakarusa);

a Locke news item comments that he is "a good reasoner, a very good speaker, and withal an excellent man." The November 18, 1875, issue of the *Sun* comments on a dastardly assault made on Daniel Brenneman at the Reformed Church in Wakarusa by a would-be Christian gentleman of Baugo Township.

Brenneman sometimes held meetings at the North Union church, which was a new church by the graveyard formed from a corner of Abraham Weldy's farm southwest of Wakarusa. Of historical value is the series of three letters pertaining to Brenneman's evangelistic efforts there. J. D. Myers of Wakarusa wrote a letter dated March 11, 1878, with the title "A Warning to Parents" and published in the March 14 Wakarusa *Sun*. In it he denounces Daniel Brenneman and accuses him of running through the neighborhood and trying to coax children to join his church. Myers says children who want to join are advised not to obey their parents and he remarks further that the devil is sowing the seed of discord in families. The following week M. P. Culp seeks in a letter to defend Brenneman and the church he founded, and tries to account for the bitterness of Myers. These two letters are followed by a much longer one by Daniel Brenneman of Goshen, Indiana, dated March 27, 1878. Brenneman writes in defense of his ministry, and expresses himself pained to learn of dissatisfaction and diversity of opinion in regard to his labors in the protracted effort at the North Union church. For the sake of justice to the cause of truth and religion he wishes to say that the charges made are incorrect, that he feels the matter was misconceived in J. D. Myers' mind or misrepresented to him, and that he is innocent of the charge of coaxing and persuading persons to join the United Mennonite Society of which he is recognized as a member and minister of the Gospel. "Suffice it to say that our society, as well as our conscience, do not approve of such measures."

An investigator can discover also that some of the leading younger people in the educational, cultural, and business affairs of the town were sons and daughters of Mennonite families of surrounding regions. John H. Brubaker, "an energetic and intelligent young man," had been a public school teacher and during his period of journalism was a very active merchant. While still in Wakarusa he prepared for and began the practice of law. His sister Mary Brubaker was a teacher in the Wakarusa school. Another native son whose name often appears in connection with educational

and cultural affairs of Wakarusa was Leander B. Nusbaum, who was a successful teacher at the Holde-man schoolhouse and who served as secretary of the Olive Township Teachers' Institute which met in the Wakarusa High School building. The name of Jennie Landis, daughter of the Mennonite family of Frederick and Catharine (Holde-man) Landis, is frequently mentioned as a teacher and participant in teachers' activities. There is mention at times of Joseph Heatwole, "a fine young man" who was the successful head of the Wakarusa school and whose ancestors were Rockingham County, Virginia, Mennonites. In those days literary societies were popular during the winter months, and two leading promoters of the Wakarusa society were John H. Brubaker and Leander B. Nusbaum. Debating was a popular feature, and on one Friday evening there was a debate between "the old war horses Samuel Holdeman and Melchor Culp." Each speaker had fifty minutes on the question, "Resolved that oral prayer is not taught in the Bible either by precept or example." The affirmative speaker Samuel Holdeman won.

Others of Mennonite rearing mentioned are Christian W. Nusbaum as Wakarusa agent of Farmers Mutual Insurance Company and as candidate for trustee of Olive Township, George W. Nusbaum as treasurer of the Masonic lodge in Wakarusa, and their sister Frances (Nusbaum) Kronk who was active socially and was the mother of the late Ina K. Slate of Goshen. Also named at times is Aaron Sensenich, brother-in-law of Editor Brubaker, Sensenich came from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and lived one mile east of Wakarusa where he was "a horse farrier" and a salesman of cattle powder. Later he became a practicing physician and lived in town.

The Wakarusa *Sun*, a nineteenth century venture in journalism in a pioneer Mennonite community in Elkhart County, Indiana, reflects the life of the time in a flourishing town and surrounding countryside. Its editors do not show religious favoritism to any particular denomination. The paucity of references to Mennonites, mentioning church affairs incidentally and saying almost nothing about practices and beliefs, gives testimony to the separation exemplified by members. We can picture Mennonites as active and productive economically and contributing to the prosperity of the community, but not mingling much socially with groups in the town.

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## History of the Mennonite Church

### Chappell, Nebraska

S. C. YODER AND BESS STUTZMAN

During the years of 1884-1885 there was much talk among the Mennonite people of Seward County, Nebraska, about the good land that was said to be available for settlement in the western part of the state. Many of the homeseekers were people who had moved from Ohio and other eastern communities and were disappointed to find that the best lands in Seward and adjoining counties, where their friends and relatives lived, had already been occupied. Hence, they began to cast about for other places where they could secure government land and provide for themselves the homes they desired. Deuel County at the western end of the state was said to be such a place.

Sometime during the year 1885, Abraham Stutzman, a gaunt little man with a white beard, appeared in Chappell on an exploration tour and was fortunate to find what he was looking for. He consequently filed on a quarter section of land about two miles east of Chappell which was then hardly more than a mere village.

During the same year two young men, Mike Stutzman, son of Jake Stutzman, and Pete Stutzman, son of Christian Stutzman, both from Milford, in Seward County, drove an ox-team to Chappell. It took them twenty-one days to make the trip.

The news that good homestead lands were still available in that era spread rapidly throughout the colony at Milford and gave rise to much discussion in the Abraham Stutzman family as to when and who should make the first move. It was finally decided that owing to the illness of grandmother, Sarah Garver Stutzman, wife of Jacob Stutzman, who was living in the Abraham Stutzman home, that they would postpone their move and that their son Adam and his family should go. They accordingly, made the trip and arrived at Chappell the forepart of April, 1886. During the fall of that same year the following families also migrated to the new country—Abraham Stutzman, Jake Stutzman, William Stutzman, William Miller, George McCormick, Tom Johnson, Pete Stutzman, and Ben Slater. During the years of 1887, 1888, and 1889, other families from the eastern part of the state as well as a few from Iowa and Indiana came also to make this new country their home. Among them was Noah Petersheim and Dan Hostetler from Iowa, and Nicholas

Roth from Indiana, the Kauffmans, Howitts, Jake Roth, and other families, practically all of whom still have descendants living there.

From the beginning of the settlement the people were interested in keeping up their church life and held such meetings as they could provide for themselves every two weeks. Jonathan Smucker, a minister from Indiana, and Joseph Burkey from Tiskilwa, Illinois, were, in 1888, appointed by the Eastern Conferences to assist the churches and scattered members in Nebraska and other states. Their itinerary included Chappell. Here they held meetings and appointed one of the members of the group to serve as leader in their worship services. Joseph Burkey returned in the spring of 1889 and on May 17, he ordained Nicholas Roth to the ministry and placed him in charge of the newly formed congregation.

Land for the church and cemetery was donated by Christian Sutter in April, 1889. Work on the construction of a church was begun in the spring of 1890. The building was located on the plot, donated by Sutter, four miles east and two and one-half miles north of Chappell. This building was used until 1917 when it was replaced by a new and larger structure which served the congregation for forty years.

During the years that followed the arrival of the first settlers, more families came to join the new colony on the western prairies. Then followed a series of devastatingly dry years, when little rain fell. During this period many people left the country and returned to their former homes or to new settlements in other states. Some of the homesteads were relinquished or when title could be secured they were sold for a mere pittance. Money was scarce and much land throughout the area was sold for taxes. With the return of the clouds and rain, and the discovery of dry farming methods a new wave of people moved in during the early years of 1900's and by 1910 the boom was on.

Those who remained and weathered the droughts, hail, blizzards, loneliness, sickness, death, and all the privations and hardships incident to pioneer life were the ones that profited. They learned to be content with such things as they could have and adapt themselves to the country and the ways of the wind and weather. They, together

with others who came later, now turned these wide prairies of the short-grass country into a land of prosperous and happy homes with extensive fields of lush grain, herds of cattle, prosperous cities and towns, schools and churches, and comfortable and happy homes.

But the difficult years were not a total loss. People had time to be friendly, and their mutual need encouraged a neighborly spirit and helpfulness which definitely marked the life of the pioneer. There were newly born babies that brought joy to the homes as babies always do. They grew up and knew no home but the wide spreading plains, the glow of the western sky at eventide and with the dawn of each new day the silver lining in the morning clouds. There were weddings and other social events and much visiting among friends and neighbors to brighten the drabness of their lives, and always the thrill of rain to clean the atmosphere and bring new life to the prairies. There were gardens, too, which the noble women kept alive with patient labor to provide some variety to their routine diet, and perhaps best of all here in these wide uncrowded spaces one's soul could feel free!

In 1893, Bishop Joseph Schlegel of Milford, Nebraska, was appointed by the Western Amish Mennonite Conference as overseer of the Prairie Churches which included the one at Chappell. On November tenth of the same year he ordained John Ernst to the office of deacon in which capacity he served as long as he lived at Chappell. After the death of his wife he went to live with his children. He died at Thurman, Colorado, and is buried in the Mennonite Cemetery at that place.

Nicholas Roth, the minister at Chappell, moved to Lexington, Nebraska in 1909. Bishop Nick Roth from Milford was then appointed by the Conference to assist Joseph Schlegel in his work throughout the District. He continued to serve the Chappell congregation as Bishop until he moved to Alberta, Canada in 1910. It was during this time, 1909, that the first Bible Conference, conducted by Bishop Roth, was held in the Chappell Church. In the fall of 1910, Eli Frey from Fulton County, Ohio, and Samuel Gerber from Morton, Illinois, held the second meeting of that kind at the church and drew large crowds from the community to the evening services. A year later in November, 1911, D. D. Miller from Middlebury, Indiana, conducted a similar meeting.

S. C. Yoder and family moved to the community in the spring of 1909, and took over the management of the E. C. Stutzman farm, one mile east of the Church. In the

spring, of 1910, the C. S. Yoder family (S. C. Yoder's parents) also moved into the community. After that others came and the membership of the church grew. But the congregation was without a resident minister. During this period the deacon, John Ernst, was placed in charge of the church until S. C. Yoder was ordained to the ministry, June 4, 1911, by Joseph Schlegel of Milford. He then served as pastor in charge until he moved to Iowa in 1913. In 1911, Peter Kennel of Shickley, Nebraska, was appointed to assume charge as Bishop of the Chappell congregation.

The removal of S. C. Yoder again left the church without a pastor and on May 19, 1918, John Roth was ordained as Deacon and sometime later as a minister and was placed in charge of the congregation. Peter Kennel continued to serve as Bishop until his death in 1923 after which Daniel Lapp of Roseland, Nebraska, was appointed to serve in his stead. He served in this office until 1930 when he was succeeded by Nicholas (Nick) Birky of Thurman, Colorado. Birky moved to Oregon in 1938 after which William Eicher was placed in charge and retained his position until the congregation was transferred to the South Central District in 1957. It was during Eicher's tenure as Bishop that Fred Gingerich moved from Iowa to the Chappell community and was ordained to the ministry and placed in charge of the congregation on January 19, 1947. He continued to serve as pastor until he moved to Oregon in the fall of 1957.

For a number of years sentiment within the congregation had been developing for a change in Conference connections. Chappell was rather widely separated from the main body of the Iowa-Nebraska Conference and the members felt they could have closer fellowship with the South Central Conference which had a growing congregation and a resident bishop at Denver. Their request for the transfer was granted and on October 21, 1957, Bishop E. M. Yost of Denver and Clayton Beyler of Hesston, Kansas, received the Church as a member of that body. The names of twenty persons who signed as Charter Members constituted the new congregation. The remaining members, who resided at Julesburg, Colorado, were formally organized as a new congregation on September 8, 1957, by John Y. Swartzendruber of Kalona, Iowa, and Peter Kennel of Shickley, Nebraska, and was retained as a member of the Iowa-Nebraska Conference.

It was during the year of 1957 that the Chappell Congregation decided to abandon the former location where the church stood for sixty-seven years and move to a new location in the town of Chappell. Great changes had taken place since the first Mennonite settler had arrived in this prairie country. Earlier they all lived on farms in the vicinity of the church. Now after the withdrawal of the Julesburg group they practically all lived in Chappell. The grazing lands were gone or were occupied by large stockmen. The wheat land had passed into the hands of large operators and the small farmer with his fields of wheat and some livestock was crowded out of business.

Hence the task of taking down the old building, which in 1917 had replaced the original one, was begun. On November 9th, 1957, six young men from Denver and eight men from the local congregation began the dismantling job. By November 25th, the building was down and the lumber stocked in Chappell ready to be used in the construction of the new building.

The ground-breaking service was held on June 13, 1958, with E. M. Yost in charge of the ceremony. The excavation of the basement was begun the following day. Sol Roup came from Kalona, Iowa, on November 17th to superintend the construction of the building. With the aid of local help he had the structure up and partly enclosed by the 27th of that month when he was called away on account of other duties. The basement, however, was finished by February, 1959, and on the 17th of that month the first services were held there. In the interim between the time that services were discontinued in the old building and begun in the new one, their meetings were held in the basement of the City Library.

The problem of keeping the congregation supplied with a pastor was not always an easy one and after Fred Gingerich's removal to Oregon it loomed large again. E. M. Yost, the Bishop, filled some of the appointments himself and from time to time secured such other help as was available. Glen Martin from Denver, now and then preached for them. Fred Alderfer, also from Denver, supplied the pulpit during one year and Cletus Miller, a student at Greeley State College, assisted until August, 1960, when he moved to Chappell and assumed pastoral charge of the congregation.

The architecture of the new building is of Gothic type, constructed of split rock with laminated beams and roofed with red cedar decking. The interior is finished with ma-

hogany sheeting with exposed beams. The auditorium seats one hundred fifty people. The basement is equipped with a lovely kitchen and class rooms for the Sunday School.

The cemetery on the prairie, however, was not easily moved and will continue to be used by the congregation. In recent years it has been greatly improved by the planting of trees and shrubs. In the early fall of 1960, a bronze plaque bearing the names of "Pioneer Babes" for the infants named and unnamed, who lie buried in a plot at the end of the cemetery, whose graves had no markers was designed and donated to the church by S. C. Yoder. The plaque also contains the names of their parents and date of death. It is mounted on a substantial cement block and set in the midst of a cluster of shrubs. A fitting dedicatory service is being planned.

The date for the dedication of the Church was set for November 6, 1960. The day was a beautiful autumn day and a large crowd of people were present for the occasion. Bishop E. M. Yost presided at the meetings. During the morning service Cletus Miller was officially installed as pastor of the congregation.

The dedicatory services were held in the afternoon. S. C. Yoder, from Goshen, Indiana, a former pastor, gave the dedicatory address, which was based on Haggai 2:9, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the glory of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts, and in this place will I give peace."

The speaker recounted the hardships which the early pioneers endured as they struggled to establish themselves in their new homes and maintain the faith which has been handed on to them from generation to generation since the days of the Reformation. The new building, he said, stands as a fitting memorial to their faith and courage. These children of the early pioneers were reluctant to give up their former place of worship which for many years stood as one of the landmarks of the country but this new one which is dedicated here today, so fitted and suited to the needs of the times in which we live, may well become a greater blessing and service to the community. However, buildings in themselves do not automatically or spontaneously produce results which come only as The Word is preached and the facilities are put to proper use.

After the service refreshments were served in the basement to the three hundred or more people who were present for the occasion.



# Mennonite Research News and Notes

MELVIN GINGERICH

D. H. Hack's *Die Kolonisation der Mennoniten im Paraguayischen Chaco* has recently been published in German by Konigliches Tropeninstitut, Amsterdam.

William M. Gering completed a master's thesis at Indiana University in January 1961 on "Mennonite Attitudes Toward Theatrical Enterprises."

Marion R. Wenger completed a master's thesis at Ohio State University in 1961 on "Pilgrim Marbecks Strassburger Bekenntnis: Vorarbeiten zu einer wortgeschichtlichen Studie der Schriften des Marbeck-Kreises."

The Waddell Printing Company, La Grange, Indiana, in 1960 printed *Family Record of Henry D. Mast and Elizabeth Miller*.

A. L. E. Verheyden's *Geschiedenis der Doopsgezinden in de Zuidelyke Nederlanden in de XVIe Eeuw* was published in Brussels in 1959.

Weyburn W. Groff, Yeotmal, India, is doing a doctoral dissertation at New York University on "Nonviolence: A Comparative Study of Mohandes K. Gandhi and the Mennonite Church on the Subject of Nonviolence."

The Faith and Life Press, Newton, Kansas, has published a booklet by John Howard Yoder on the subject *The Christian and Capital Punishment*. It is Number 1 in the Institute of Mennonite Studies Series.

Cornelius Dyck is writing his doctoral dissertation at the University of Chicago on "Hans de Ries: Theologian and Churchman. A Study in Second Generation Dutch Anabaptism."

Myron L. Ebersole completed a master's thesis at the University of Chicago on "The Anabaptist View of the Church and the Therapeutic Community." His study was sponsored by the Institute of Mennonite Studies, Elkhart, Indiana.

William Klassen, Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana will be spending the year 1961-62 at the Menninger Clinic, Topeka, Kansas, studying the question of the nature of forgiveness, the place of the group in forgiveness, the function of group discipline, and the role of confession in achieving release from guilt.

The Archives of the Brethren in Christ Church are located at Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania. The archivist is Carlton O. Wittlinger.

The Fall 1960 Number of *Review of Religious Research* published an article by Calvin Redekop on "Decision Making in a Sect."

The Forty-eighth Annual Volume of the Waterloo Historical Society,

Kitchener, Ontario (March 1960) contained articles on "Benjamin Eby," "Preston in Early Canada," and "Founder of Preston Commemorated." The founder of Preston was John Erb.

William Klassen received his Doctor of Theology degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1960. His dissertation was on "The Hermeneutics of Pilgrim Marpeck."

Alfred Henry Siemens did a master's thesis at the University of British Columbia in 1960 on "Mennonite Settlements in the Lower Fraser Valley."

Paul M. Yoder received his Ph. D. degree in music education on June 3, 1961, from Florida State University. His dissertation was on Mennonite church music.

John C. Wenger's book on "The Mennonites in Indiana and Michigan" is in press. It is being published by the Herald Press, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania.

Franklin H. Littell wrote "Protestantism and the Great Commission" for the *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, issue of October 1959. The article contains references to the Anabaptist conception of the Great Commission.

James Stayer is doing a doctoral dissertation on "The Development of the Doctrine of Nonresistance in Early Continental Anabaptism," at Cornell University. Mr. Stayer will spend a year at the University of Freiburg in Germany beginning in September 1961, working on his source materials.

## HISTORY OF THE CHRISTOPHEL MENNONITE CHURCH

(Continued from Page 2)

15. John Stauffer—farmer born in Ohio.
16. Jacob H. Wisler—farmer born in Ohio.
17. Christian Weaver—farmer born in Ohio.
18. Klaas H. Fisher—farmer born in Holland.
19. M. B. Metzler—wagon and carriage manufacturer born in Ohio.

Wesley W. Christophel summarizes the end of the Christophel log church with the following words: "There are no written records to my knowledge. Jacob Fisher was one of the first trustees for Salem Church when it was built, and I suppose he was the one that closed the affairs of the log church as no one was appointed to trustee until it was sold for \$20.00 to a farmer nearby named Belt."

## An Amish Minister's Certificate

JOHN UMBLE

The following Amish "Zeugniss-brief" was recently discovered in the C. Z. Yoder family Bible. The original is in German script.

"The grace of God be wished as a greeting of peace to all ministers, brethren and sisters to whom this may come to hand. Be mindful of us in prayer, as we also are minded."

"Herewith we certify that our eldest minister, J. K. Yoder, stands in peace in our congregation so far as we know."

Christian Brand  
Christian K. Yoder  
Jonathan Schmucker

Christian Brand was a Swiss immigrant and the senior minister in the Oak Grove congregation of Wayne County, Ohio; Christian K. Yoder was the brother of John K. Yoder, to whom the certificate was given; and Jonathan Smucker was a deacon in the Oak Grove church. Christian K. Yoder later moved to Logan County, Ohio.

Apparently this kind of certificate was used by a minister when visiting in other communities or when attending conference. Silvanus Yoder, Goshen, Indiana brought such a certificate with him when he came to Indiana to be married, but he was not asked to show it. When S. E. Allgyer went to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to marry my aunt, Priscilla Umble, he carried such a certificate with him from Champaign County, Ohio, and caused the local ministers considerable embarrassment because his coat did not conform to their accepted pattern. Not to disregard a certificate signed by their brethren in Ohio, the Lancaster ministers, after lengthy consultation, decided to go on with the ceremony provided he would borrow a coat locally to be worn during the ceremony.

## ELKHART YOUNG MEN BECAME CHURCH LEADERS

(Continued from Page 1)

widely through the church in behalf of the publishing interests of Funk until 1893 when he established the Mennonite Home Mission in Chicago. Later he established the Mennonite Mission in Canton, Ohio. He was the first president of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, serving until his death in 1911. He gave much time to evangelistic meetings and to the promotion of missions. He was also the author of two books and the first editor of the *Young People's Paper*, published at Elkhart.

## Book Reviews

*American Mennonite Worship. Its Roots, Development and Application.* By Abraham P. Toews. Exposition Press, Inc., New York, 1960. Pp. 193, \$4.00.

*American Mennonite Worship* is a book that was originally a master's thesis at Concordia Theological Seminary, Clayton, Missouri. The problem that the author considers is what in a period of changing Mennonite church patterns of worship is of sufficient value to be retained. It is the author's concern that the answers to the problems of changing Mennonite worship patterns will "keep the brotherhood strong and firmly placed upon the proven faith of the fathers."

The author was born in Steinbach, Manitoba, and has served churches in the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren denomination. Although he deals with all of the major Mennonite groups, his background is with the Russian Mennonite wing and with them he is most familiar and accurate.

The book is divided into two sections. The first is on the roots and development of American Mennonite worship. The second is on "Applications of American Mennonite Worship." In section one after stating the problem, he defines the term Mennonite and deals with their European beginnings. Following this, he identifies the various groups of American Mennonites and describes briefly their worship practices. He also discusses the Mennonite house of worship as well as their attitude towards symbols.

The author does not present direct advice on how Mennonite worship services should be conducted but at least he does pose the problem in realistic terms. No other history of Mennonite worship has ever been written and so this book plows virgin soil.

Covering so large an area, it is not surprising that mistakes crept in when he was not dealing with his own Evangelical Mennonite Brethren. For example, he states that the Conservative Amish Mennonite Church uses the *Ausbund* hymnal, that after 1850 the Amish Mennonites built their churches near streams to insure convenience in baptizing, that prior to the twentieth century the Church year was followed in all Mennonite churches, and that in 1957 the General Conference Mennonites had only about fifty congregations when the number should have been around two hundred fifty.

—Melvin Gingerich

*The Miller Story and Joel B. Miller, 1811-85, Catherine Brenneman, 1813-70, Genealogy.* By Alta Elizabeth Schrock and Olen L. Miller. Joel B. Miller Book Committee, Penn Alps Inc., Grantsville, Maryland, 1960. Pp. 160. Illustrated. \$3.50.

John Miller, an Amish immigrant, came to eastern Pennsylvania from Germany previous to 1757 and then settled in the Berlin area of southwest Pennsylvania perhaps as early as 1772. Among his children was Jacob, who had a son Benedict. Joel B. Miller, the subject of the book, was the son of Benedict. The descendants of John Miller are widely scattered in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, Garrett County, Maryland, Holmes County, Ohio, and Johnson County, Iowa, as well as in other areas.

Joel B. Miller, the ancestor of the approximately 500 families listed in this book, owned the family homestead where Springs in Somerset County is now situated. He also owned land in Garrett County, Maryland. Miller was known for his benevolences, community leadership, and craftsmanship. For years he was a song leader in his Amish congregation.

The genealogical section, by Olen L. Miller, with its hundreds of descendants, will be welcomed by those who are in the Miller relationship. The Miller story comprising the first part of the volume, written by Alta Schrock, will be of interest to a wide range of readers, for it is an enthusiastic account of a pioneer who demonstrated sterling qualities of character. His versatility made him an unusual person and therefore an interesting personality. Although the section on early land holdings will be of interest primarily to the direct descendants, the reader can easily skip this section without losing the thread of the story. The book is a labor of love effectively done. It can serve as a model to others who are writing family histories.

—Melvin Gingerich

## NEWS AND NOTES

John C. Landis, Bristol, Indiana, grandson of John S. Coffman, recently contributed several Coffman note books to the Archives of the Mennonite Church. In one of the books was a teaching certificate issued to John S. Coffman in Rockingham County, Virginia, in October 1872. By it he was given authority to teach as an assistant in Fairview School.

The Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen College now has more than 15,000 volumes of books and bound periodicals.

## HANS YODER

Hans Yoder, the Oley pioneer, was a member of the Whitmarsh Dutch Reformed Church in Pennsylvania in 1710, according to the records of that church which were edited by Wm. J. Hinke and published in an early volume of the *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society*. According to the same record, Hans married ANNA ROSINA LEDEE, in 1711. The marriage record calls him "widower of Fronica Iselman." This may mean that he was an outsider in that predominantly Dutch group. [He very probably was Swiss.] Despite this reference, he may even have been of Mennonite stock. His father-in-law, Jean LeDee, a Huguenot from Eppstein, Germany, had settled in Oley as early as 1712, and Hans Yoder took up land there as early as 1714, according to the provincial land records. Another daughter of Jean LeDee married Philip Kuehlenwein. "Kalwein" and "Joetter" are mentioned as followers of Matthias Baumann's "Newborn Sect" in the *Chronicon Ephratense*.

—Donald H. Yoder

## A PIONEER VENTURE IN JOURNALISM

(Continued from Page 4)

There is little evidence of participation in cultural activities. They are generally regarded with respect, and only of persons connected with the Wisler and Brenneman schisms are unpleasantly critical remarks published. But during the course of the isolation and separation talented young people of Mennonite background lost their oneness with their group; they became participants in the educational and cultural affairs of the Wakarusa community and derived a satisfaction that the Mennonite Church did not seem to provide.

Lists of names of subscribers indicate that the *Wakarusa Sun* entered numerous Mennonite homes. In the previous decade the *Herald of Truth* had come into existence, and was now also an Elkhart County publication and received in Mennonite homes. There is record of at least one occasion—May 4, 1876—that Funk, presumably Editor John F. Funk, called at the *Wakarusa Sun* office. The two periodicals together contain a substantial amount of good reading material, and the *Sun* may be credited with contributing at least something to the culture of the Mennonites.

Mrs. Fannie Lapp recently contributed a collection of India souvenirs to the Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen, Indiana.



